

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

UNCLAS SANAA 000432

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR NEA, NEA/ARP, NEA/PD, NEA/RA, DS/OP/NEA AND
S/CT, NICOLE IBBINS-SEDACA
CENTCOM FOR POLAD
NEA/PPD MQUINN, JSMITH, CWHITTLESEY, FFINVER
NEA/ARPI AMISENHEIMER, TROBERTS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [OIIP](#) [KMDR](#) [PTER](#) [KISL](#) [YM](#) [DEMOCRATIC REFORM](#)

SUBJECT: SPECIAL MEDIA REACTION ON UNDER SECRETARY PAULA
DOBRIANSKY'S VISIT TO SANA'A, YEMEN, FEBRUARY 24, 2005.

1. SUMMARY: U.S. UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR GLOBAL AFFAIRS
PAULA J. DOBRIANSKY'S VISIT TO SANA'A, YEMEN WAS EXTENSIVELY
COVERED IN THE YEMENI MEDIA. MOST NEWSPAPERS REPORTED ON THE
VISIT WITHOUT COMMENT, CITING HER MEETINGS WITH THE
PRESIDENT AND OTHER ROYG OFFICIALS AS WELL AS HER
DISCUSSIONS WITH CIVIL SOCIETY LEADERS AND THE SUBSEQUENT
PRESS CONFERENCE. MOST PRESS REPORTS FOCUSED ON HER PRAISE
FOR DEMOCRATIC REFORM IN YEMEN AND STATEMENTS IN SUPPORT OF
PRESS FREEDOM AND ANTI-CORRUPTION MEASURES. END SUMMARY

2. AL-THAWRA OFFICIAL DAILY (02/25) CARRIED FIVE
STRAIGHTFORWARD REPORTS ON THE VISIT WITHOUT COMMENTARY.
ONE STORY, DESCRIBING DOBRIANSKY'S MEETING WITH PRESIDENT
SALEH SAID THE TWO OFFICIALS DISCUSSED THE OUTCOMES OF THE
SEA ISLAND G-8 SUMMIT. THE REPORT ADDED THAT DEMOCRATIC
DEVELOPMENT, WOMEN'S INVOLVEMENT IN POLITICAL LIFE, THE
MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE ACCOUNT AND ITS ROLE IN YEMENI
DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS WERE THE FOCUS OF DISCUSSIONS ON YEMENI
DOMESTIC ISSUES. IN A FRONT PAGE STORY ON THE VISIT, AL-
THAWRA QUOTED THE U/S AS SAYING THAT "YEMEN IS A LEADER OF
FREEDOMS IN THE REGION." AL-THAWRA ALSO CARRIED HER
STATEMENT COMMENDING YEMEN'S "LEADING" ROLE IN DEMOCRATIC
REFORM IN THE REGION AS WELL AS THE "ONGOING DEBATES" AT THE
NATIONAL LEVEL TO "IMPROVE THE STATUS OF WOMEN IN THE
COUNTRY." OTHER OFFICIAL MEDIA TOOK THE SAME POSITIVE TACK.
SABA NEWS AGENCY HIGHLIGHTED THE U/S'S FOCUS ON PRESS
FREEDOMS WITH THE HEADLINE: "US OFFICIAL URGES YEMENI
PARLIAMENT TO ABOLISH PROSECUTION AND IMPRISONMENT OF
JOURNALISTS."

3. THE ADEN-BASED INDEPENDENT AL-AYYAM DAILY PUBLISHED A
FULL-PAGE REPORT ON THE CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM AND THE PRESS
CONFERENCE WITH A BANNER HEADLINE: "IT IS IMPORTANT THAT
YEMEN NOT LOSE ITS GOOD REPUTATION ON PRESS FREEDOM."

4. YEMEN TV BROADCAST TWO REPORTS THE SAME DAY (02/24) ON
ITS PRIME TIME NEWSCAST WITH COMPREHENSIVE COVERAGE THE
UNDER SECRETARY'S MEETINGS. THE REPORTS FOCUSED ON THE
EXPANSION OF THE YEMENI-US PARTNERSHIP, QUOTING THE A/S
SAYING: "YEMEN PLAYS AN EFFECTIVE ROLE IN PROMOTING
DEMOCRACY AND FREEDOMS."

5. ALTHOUGH ALMOST ALL REGIONAL TELEVISION NEWS CHANNELS
SUCH AS AL-JAZEERA, AL-ARABIYYA, AL-AKHBARIYYA, AL-HURRA,
MBC AND KUWAIT TV WERE PRESENT AT THE CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM
AND THE SUBSEQUENT PRESS CONFERENCE, ONLY AL-JAZEERA AND AL-
ARABIYA COVERED THEM BRIEFLY. AL-JAZEERA QUOTED A STATEMENT
BY U/S DOBRIANSKY IN A REPORT IT BROADCAST ON THE YEMENI
APPEALS COURT DECISION ON THE USS COLE CASE. SPEAKING DURING
THE PRESS CONFERENCE HELD ON THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 24 (TWO DAYS
BEFORE THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE COURT DECISION), MS.
DOBRIANSKY SAID: "WE COMMEND THE YEMENI GOVERNMENT AND THE
ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE FOR CONDUCTING TWO DIFFICULT
TRIALS VERY PROFESSIONALLY AND OPENLY." THE AL-ARABIYYA
REPORT ALSO COMMENTED THAT THE UNDER SECRETARY'S VISIT CAME
ON THE EVE OF THE APPEALS COURT DECISION ON THE COLE CASE.

6. COVERAGE BY TWO INDEPENDENT NEWS WEBSITES (RA'Y NEWS, AL-
TAGHYEER) AND THE RULING PARTY'S AL-MO'TAMAR NET FOCUSED ON
THE U/S'S SUPPORT FOR PRESS FREEDOM, DEMOCRACY AND ANTI-
CORRUPTION MEASURES.

7. COMMENT:GENERALLY, MOST SENIOR US OFFICIAL VISITS TO
YEMEN RECEIVE SOME NEGATIVE COVERAGE IN THE YEMENI AND
REGIONAL MEDIA. IN LIGHT OF THIS FACT, THE MEDIA REACTION
TO UNDER SECRETARY DOBRIANSKY'S VISIT IS SIGNIFICANT,
BECAUSE OF THE LACK OF NEGATIVE COVERAGE TO DATE. TO THE
CONTRARY, ALL OF THE REPORTS ON THE VISIT, IN ADDITION TO
BEING STRAIGHTFORWARD AND FACTUAL, HAD A POSITIVE TONE TO
THEM. EVEN HABITUAL CRITICS OF THE UNITED STATES, SUCH AS
AL-JAZEERA, COULD NOT FIND ANYTHING NEGATIVE TO SAY ABOUT
THE VISIT AND THE ISSUES DISCUSSED DURING THE UNDER
SECRETARY'S MEETINGS WITH OFFICIALS AND HER DISCUSSIONS WITH

SIPDIS

CIVIL SOCIETY LEADERS. END COMMENT

KRAJESKI